NUMB. VIII.

# The GRUMBLER.

*By Squire* GIZZARD.

*Crudeles vocabo, qui puniendi cauſam habent, modum non habent.* Seneca.

THURSDAY, *April* 14. 1715.

THE following Letter, which I receiv'd on *Monday* laſt from an unknown Hand, is ſo well tim'd, and of ſo great Importance, that I might expect to be deſervedly cenſur'd by the Author of it, ſhould I neglect communicating it to the Publick upon the firſt opportunity.

*SIR,*

'I doubt not of obtaining your *Pardon*, if the 'Seaſon induces me to trouble you with a 'Letter of a much graver Turn, than any of thoſe 'which you have hitherto entertain'd the World 'with. I muſt confeſs, I have not, at any Time, 'met with a more ſenſible Shock to my Temper, 'than from the peruſal of an *Edict* lately publiſh'd 'in *France*, a faithful Tranſlation of which is to be 'found in the *Daily Courant* of *Wedneſday*, *April* 'the 6*th*. No Man that is endu'd with common 'Humanity, can reflect upon the ſevere Proceed-'ings and terrible *Edicts* againſt the unhappy Pro-'teſtants in thoſe Parts, without feeling in him-'ſelf a tender Compaſſion for their Misfortunes, 'and a ſecret Horror againſt a Religion, which 'ſeems ſo far from eſtabliſhing *Peace on Earth and Good-Will towards Men.*

'By thoſe miſerable People's Calamities, we 'may conclude, what a Nation of Proteſtants is 'to expect from a Popiſh Prince, let his natural 'Temper be ever ſo full of Pity or Generoſity, 'while he is driven on by a cruel Set of Prieſts, 'whoſe Intereſt it is to perſuade him, that by his 'very Barbarities, he is laying up a Store of Me-'rit in Heaven. Nothing but a miſtaken Zeal 'of this Nature, could have carry'd a Monarch, 'born with all the noble Qualifications that cou'd 'be wiſh'd for, to permit the Practice of ſuch re-'peated Cruelties, as thoſe of the Reform'd Re-'ligion have labour'd under in all the Provinces 'of *France*.

'Some have been condemn'd to an ignomini-'ous Death, others have been confin'd to a 'wretched Slavery for Life in the Gallies, meer-'ly for refuſing to embrace the *Romiſh* Faith. 'Nay farther, that they might, as far as lay in 'their Power, hinder theſe poor Creatures from 'enjoying Reſt even in their Graves, in *April* '1686. there was another *Edict* made, of which 'this laſt is but Explanatory, againſt the very 'Carcaſſes and Memories of all ſuch as have da-'red, or ſhall dare to own themſelves, upon their 'Death-beds, of that Perſwaſion, which Worldly 'Prudence, or want of Reſolution, made them 'diſſemble during their Life-time.

'What better Fate than this could our Nati-'on have expected, if Divine Providence had not 'interpos'd, when our Fears grew thick upon us, 'and ſaved us from the Tyranny of a Popiſh Pre-'tender, educated and grown up into Manhood, 'in that very Country, where Proteſtants are 'treated with ſuch exemplary Severities.

'Every Proteſtant cannot but be ſenſible how 'far this Procedure is from favouring of the mild 'and compaſſionate Temper every where recom-'mended to us in the Goſpel; where a Tender-'neſs for thoſe that differ from us, is made no 'ſmall Part of a Chriſtian's Duty. We may re-'member, that when our Saviour was treated 'with

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'with Contempt and Inſolence, in a Village of 'Samaria, and his miſtaken Diſciples would have 'had him call for Fire from Heaven to deſtroy 'thoſe Unbelievers, he rebuked them, *as not 'knowing what Spirit they were of.* But leaving this 'to Men, whoſe Province it more properly is, 'and who cannot more effectually diſcharge the 'Duty of their Function, than in teaching the 'true Evangelical Doctrines of Charity and Bro-'therly Love : I muſt own, I cannot conceive 'by what Authority any Society can puniſh a 'particular Member, for differing in his Opinion 'from the reſt of the Body, unleſs that Opinion 'neceſſarily leads him to the Practice of ſomething 'deſtructive to that Society.

'By the eternal Law of Nature and Reaſon, 'every one is appointed the ſole Arbiter over his 'own Thoughts, nor is it in the Power of the 'united Force of Mankind to impoſe an Opinion 'upon any Man. Belief is the neceſſary Reſult 'of Conviction, and no Man has it at his Choice 'what he pleaſes to believe, becauſe that Act is 'form'd only by the Evidence that preſents it ſelf 'to his Underſtanding. Nor let it ſeem ſtrange, that 'Men ſhould differ ſo widely in their Sentiments, 'ſince we ſee even material Objects appear in a 'different Form to different Men, according to 'the various Texture of their Eyes.

'But, ſays the Papiſt, we who believe in the 'Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, and know her 'to be alone Infallible, are we not excuſeable 'for endeavouring to compel our Brethren into 'the only Community in which they can be ſa-'ved ? No, indeed ! For were their Infalli-'bility as great as they would pretend, yet there 'ſeems to be no Reaſon, that an ignorant Wretch 'ſhould ſuffer the Extremities of Torture, for 'not being able to comprehend its Certainty. 'A Sovereign would be thought guilty of a ſignal 'Barbarity, that ſhould condemn a Man either 'to Death or the Gallies, only for not being 'able to diſtinguiſh Colours, whilſt he labour'd 'under a Jaundice. And is it not as hard to ex-'erciſe theſe Severities upon a Man, for an Er-'ror, which (through ſome Incapacity or other) 'he cannot be brought to perceive ?

'Perſecution, we know, may make Men Hy-'pocrites, but never yet made a true Convert. 'Moreover, nothing can more evidently demon-'ſtrate to the World, that a Church diſtruſts 'the Goodneſs of its Cauſe, than its having re-'courſe to Violence and Oppreſſion, inſtead of 'Argument and Reaſon.

'To cloſe up theſe Reflexions, which I could 'not forbear communicating to you, upon the 'ſight of the above-mention'd News-Paper : Let 'us ſuppoſe, (though the very Suppoſition is ab-'ſurd) that ſome Impoſtor, by Artifice and the 'Deluſion of falſe Miracles, had eſtabliſh'd over 'all the Chriſtian World, a Doctrine breathing 'nothing but Cruelty and Oppreſſion, Rancour 'and Malice, and Perſecution, to all thoſe that 'ſhould not immediately believe in him. And 'ſuppoſe farther, that in proceſs of Time, ſome 'great good Man ſhould riſe, who, (by the 'Power of his Eloquence, and by the Influence 'of his Addreſs in expounding ſeveral Paſſages) 'ſhould mitigate the harſh Terms of ſuch a pre-'tended Revelation, and render it more agree-'able to Society ; would not even every one who 'differ'd from him in their Judgment about the 'Senſe of thoſe Paſſages, entertain the greateſt 'Veneration for this miſtaken good Man ? And 'if ſo, how deteſtable muſt thoſe Wretches be, 'who knowingly pervert a Diſpenſation full of 'Mercy, and explain it out of its natural Meek-'neſs and Indulgence, only to ſerve their cruel 'Purpoſes ? I am

*SIR,*

*Your moſt humble Servant,*

F. G.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

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